



Wednesday Prayer

2nd Sunday in Lent – To acknowledge the suffering

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Mark 8:31-33

In the midst of his ministries in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus allowed the disciples to figuratively look into a crystal ball to see what was to happen – that he, their beloved savior, would suffer at the hands of the religious leaders of the day, be killed and then rise again. Peter rebukes him for saying this so openly. He doesn't like the image this brings to mind, finding it shocking. He wants to follow the Jesus who loves and heals and saves, not Jesus who suffers a humiliating death on the cross. Jesus, in turn, rebukes Peter and reminds him that he is focusing on *his* human desires, not divine actions.

In our current American culture, many respond like Peter. Like Peter, many want to focus on the loving, healing Jesus rather than the harshness of Jesus' suffering and our betrayal of him. We don't want to see the suffering and we especially don't want to see how our actions or inactions may contribute. We are tempted to look away from the ugliness of sin and suffering.

Lent is a time to intentionally look at the suffering, including the suffering of those who are experiencing or recovering from sexual exploitation, and point it out to the world, so that we can also point out Jesus' victory over suffering and death on Easter morning. Lent is a time to acknowledge the sin in our own lives and the sin we see in the world and turn to prayer, so that our hearts and minds are moved to change and action. Those who suffer from sexual abuse and exploitation can know that Jesus survived the humiliation and pain of the cross and rose again. God is with them in their suffering and in their healing. If we want to follow the Jesus who loves and heals and saves, we must also follow the Jesus who suffers and dies on the cross.

Gracious God, you sent your son to save us, knowing that it would involve suffering and death in order to bring new life. Through our Lenten prayers, open our eyes to the suffering and our hearts and minds to action toward change in the world you created, in the world you love. Amen.

Written by Kay Kinkel, MSW, LICSW, a Behavioral Health Professional contracted with LSS of MN, a member of the Cherish All Children Advisory Board, and a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Shakopee, MN.

[Link to Cherish All Children Lenten Prayers to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation.](#)